

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 12 February 2019** at **9.00 am** when there were present:

Mr S A Vincent – Policy (Chairman)

Portfolio holders:

Mr J F Fisher	Environmental Excellence
Mrs T M Mancini-Boyle	Finance
Mr I N Moncur	Planning
Mr G Peck	Transformation and Organisational Development

Mrs Bannock and Ms Catchpole also attended the meeting for its duration.

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Finance Manager, Senior Community Planning Officer, Interim Revenues and Benefits Manager, Housing, Health and Partnership Officer, Environmental Protection Manager (Special Projects) and the Committee Officer (JO).

91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

Officer	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Deputy Chief Executive	97 - Senior Management Recruitment and Appointment Arrangements	Personal interest on behalf of senior officers present who were affected by the recruitment and appointment arrangements

92 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Copplestone and Mr Foulger.

93 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute no: 82 –Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2019-24

An updated Medium Term Financial Plan was tabled at the meeting. The

revised paper reflected the final settlement from central Government and now showed an improved estimated level of General Reserves of £11,861,000 at 31 March 2020. The Special Expenses for street lighting had also been revised to take account of Freethorpe Parish Council's decision to decommission its lights and Wroxham Parish Council's decision to take over the management of its footway lighting.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

to agree the amended Medium Term Financial Plan (attached at Appendix 1 to the signed copy of these Minutes).

94 REPRESENTATIONS FROM NON CABINET MEMBERS

The Chairman agreed that, at his discretion, all non-Cabinet Members in attendance be allowed to join the debate at the relevant point of the proceedings on request.

95 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 January 2019.

96 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Excellence Panel held on 24 January 2019.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence advised the meeting that the Panel had received a presentation on the Government's Resource and Waste Strategy. A number of areas in the Strategy were to be consulted upon and would be brought back to the Panel over the coming months.

The Panel also received a presentation on the Clean Air Strategy 2019. Proposals in the Strategy might have financial implications for the Council, if some responsibilities were passed on to local authorities.

97 SENIOR MANAGEMENT RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The report proposed options for the process of selection and appointment to the senior management staffing structure.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development

advised the meeting that the report had already been considered by the Joint Lead Member Group, the Joint Scrutiny Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet confirmed a preference for option 1 for the Deputy Chief Officer appointments. This was the same as for the Chief Officer (Director) roles ie a Member panel with the Managing Director having a formal role and vote only if the Panel votes were tied. The Panel would be composed of four Members from each Council with the same political balance as used for the Joint Appointment Panel that recruited the Managing Director. The Panel would also have a representative from the external recruitment provider to advise on HR procedure and the results from the Strengths Based Assessment, but would not have a vote.

RESOLVED

to note the recruitment process and associated timeline for appointment of Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer roles to the Senior Management structure.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) to agree the proposed Panel format, as set out in paragraph 4.11 of the report, for the Member Appointments Panel of Chief Officer roles; and
- (2) to agree option 1, as set out in paragraph 4.12 in the report for the Member Appointments Panel of Deputy Chief Officer roles; and
- (3) to agree that the Managing Director be given delegated authority to appoint on an interim basis in the event that any external appointments are required after all internal senior staff and wider internal staff groups are complete.

Reasons for decision

To agree the arrangements for the selection and appointment of the senior management structure of Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council.

98 CHANGES TO COUNCIL TAX EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM

The report set out options for increasing Council Tax premiums for long term empty properties, following the introduction of new legislation.

The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 would allow the Council to charge an additional 100 percent Council Tax on a dwelling empty over two years from April 2019. From April 2020 this could be increased to 200 percent for homes empty between five and ten years and from 2021 it could charge an additional 300 percent on properties empty for more than ten years.

The Council had the power to increase the Council Tax premium on long term empty dwellings from 100 to 150 percent since 2013. The increase, together with the work of officers and Members, had reduced the number of empty homes in the district by nearly 50 percent over this period. It was anticipated that the new increases would drive down this number even further.

A number of exemptions applied, for example where the owner had gone into residential care or was in the Armed Forces. The Council could also offer assistance in accessing grants to improve dwellings, so they could be let or sold.

It was estimated that the increases could generate approximately £72,000 in 2019/20.

The proposed policy mirrored the one being proposed in South Norfolk, which would allow officers to take maximum advantage of administering a single policy approach across both authorities. The other Norfolk billing authorities were also likely to recommend that the premium charges should be increased in full.

Norfolk County Council had offered to contribute £30,000 over two years towards the cost of administration for each billing authority that opted to increase the premium charges by the full extent.

Cabinet were also requested to consider amending the Discretionary Relief Policy to allow a discretionary reduction for those cases, where a property was generally for sale or to let.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance suggested that the Council should align its policy with other Norfolk local authorities and increase its charges to help drive down the number of empty homes in Broadland.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) That the Long Term Empty Property Premium (currently set at 50%) is:
 - (i) Increased to 100% from 1 April 2019 for those properties that are vacant for two years and over; and

- (ii) Increased to 200% from 1 April 2020 for those properties which are vacant for 5 years and over; and
 - (iii) Increased to 300% from 1 April 2021 for those properties which are vacant for 10 years and over; and
- (2) that the Discretionary Relief Policy be amended by inserting the wording appended to the report (attached at Appendix 2 to the signed copy of these Minutes).

Reasons for decision

To reduce the number of long-term empty homes in the district.

99 FINANCIAL MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2018

The report summarised the financial position of the Council as at 31 December 2018.

At the end of 2018 the Council had a total Capital Budget of £2,575,142 and expenditure and commitments of £1,879,816. This equated to 73 percent of the total budget being spent or committed: 88.3 percent of the Revenue budget had been spent by the same date.

The draw on the General Fund Reserve at year end should be lower than the budgeted draw of £149,000. Discussions were held quarterly with budget holders and so far £220,000 of in-year savings had been identified. A new IT module was to be introduced shortly that could allow monthly budget assessments to be made.

The Council's General Fund Reserves began the year at £14.26m. The level of unspent revenue budgets carried forward to be spent in the following year was £1,185,400 in April 2011; this was reduced to £331,000 in April 2018, due to a greater awareness of the need for financial efficiency.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that the Council had consistently delivered savings and efficiencies over a long period that had led to a healthy level of reserves being maintained. Moreover, the projected savings from collaboration had not been included in the base budget calculations and if they were realised they would improve the financial position of the Council even further.

RESOLVED

to note the report.

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

100 UPDATE TO STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The report proposed the addition of a Planning Support Document to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), setting out the support that the Council could offer to communities undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, as required by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

Broadland currently offered a range of support to communities in the district that were developing Neighbourhood Plans. The attachment of the Planning Support Document into the SCI would formalise the support offered to communities undertaking neighbourhood planning in the district, as well as clarifying the areas of Neighbourhood Plan activity that Council officers should not be leading on.

The Chairman noted and congratulated the Community Planning Team on the excellent work they were doing to support Neighbourhood Planning in the district.

RESOLVED

to agree to the incorporation of the proposed 'Broadland District Council Neighbourhood Planning Support' Statement within the Council's current Statement of Community Involvement (attached at Appendix 3 to the signed copy of these Minutes).

Reasons for decision

To meet legislative requirements.

101 BROADLAND BUSINESS PLAN 2019-23

The report summarised the outcomes of a number of resident/stakeholder engagement activities, which had been used to inform the development of the Council's next Business Plan.

Activities included: one to one meetings with major private and public sector stakeholders; two workshops with stakeholders from across the business, voluntary and public sectors and an online residents' questionnaire.

From the feedback received a revised Council Vision, together with updated Ambitions and Objectives were proposed in the Appendix to the report. If

approved, officers would draft additional narrative and measures in support of the Business Plan which would be presented for final approval to the Council in March 2019.

The Chairman considered that the proposed Council vision (Shaping our local area by helping people to live and work better) lacked passion. He suggested that the vision from the current Business Plan (Growing a strong and vibrant Broadland with more jobs, more homes and more opportunities for all) had more conviction and something more similar to this should be drafted for the new Business Plan. Members noted that South Norfolk's vision referred to making it 'one of the best places to live and work in the country' and that Broadland's vision should be similarly ambitious.

A Member suggested that more emphasis be placed on business support and that the Business Park should be specifically referenced. An objective to improve air quality should also be included, as well as a linkage between environmental excellence and planning policy to improve build quality and provide more green infrastructure.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the outcomes from the recent resident and stakeholder engagement activities; and
- (2) to propose a number of amendments to the vision, ambitions and objectives of the Council for inclusion in the Broadland Business Plan 2019-23.

Reasons for decision

To revise and update the Council's Business Plan.

102 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY ANNUAL UPDATE

The report presented the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty Annual Report as required under the Equality Act 2010.

The legislation required the Council to have due regard to the need to:

- (i) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- (ii) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- (iii) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The duty covered nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership

The Corporate Equalities Group (CEG), made up of staff, union and elected Members, acted as a mechanism through which equalities issues and activities could be disseminated, discussed and devised. At the beginning of 2018/19 year the CEG agreed the following seven actions under three overarching themes:

(i) Health in all Policies

- Work in partnership to better understand mental health issues for children and young people.
- Continue work to become a Dementia Friendly Organisation including, in our role with the Dementia Action Alliance.

(ii) Equalities within the Community

- Support the Community Relations Equality Board and the Community Relations Equality Network with the introduction of the Multi-agency Hate Crime Reporting Protocol.
- Connect with religious and faith groups.
- Support Norwich Pride in July 2018 and Black History Month in October 2018.

(iii) Our Equalities

- Draft, agree and implement a refreshed and simplified Equalities Impact Assessment including Health as a characteristic for consideration as per a Health in all Policies approach in addition to Rurality and Low Income characteristics.
- Maintaining the workstreams initiated by the Head of Finance and Revenue Services as part of Women in Leadership course.

Activities highlighted in the report included:

A Refreshed Equalities Impact Assessment that moved away from a structured procedure to a more narrative document, which centred around the potential equalities impacts and how any identified impacts were mitigated. Three additional protected characteristics (Rurality, Health and Low Income)

had also been added to the document.

Family Culture Day: an event, which attracted 500 visitors took place at Catton Park to give attendees the chance to try new activities and experiences from cultures around the world including: Egyptian dancing, Chinese calligraphy, bushcraft, painting, and henna painting.

Collaborative Safeguarding work with South Norfolk Council was taking place, with Safeguarding Officers from the two districts meeting to share safeguarding activities and procedures. It had been agreed that a shared safeguarding reporting procedure would be created and adopted.

Further collaborative work with South Norfolk would take place over the coming year in areas such as: shared equality objectives and actions; including accessible services and actively engaging with service users.

The Chairman congratulated the Housing, Health and Partnership Officer on her comprehensive report.

RESOLVED

to approve the Public Sector Equality Duty Annual Report for publication (attached at Appendix 4 to the signed copy of these Minutes).

Reasons for decision

To meet legislative requirements.

103 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

to exclude the Press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 would be disclosed to them.

104 FOOTWAY LIGHTING CONTRACT

The report provided an update on negotiations regarding responsibility for footway lighting in the district and sought approval to extend the current contract by 12 months in order to allow time for discussions with the five parishes affected to progress, regarding the transfer of footway lighting.

RESOLVED

to

- (1) extend the current contract for one year from 1 April 2019 following publication of the modification Notice, and continue discussions with the parishes regarding the transfer of lighting stock; and
- (2) delegate to the Interim Head of Housing and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence, to conclude the arrangements for the transfer of the lights to the parishes, if this stage is reached.

Reasons for decision

To progress discussions with the parishes concerned regarding responsibility for footway lighting.

The meeting closed at 9.33 am